

Dealing with difficult student issues

Important telephone numbers: see page 3

The Student Health Centre has compiled advice and tips which can be used as guidance in various situations involving students who need help of different kinds.

Study advisors, teaching staff and other staff at the University can function as “problem detectors” in contact with students who have various difficulties. Although for most students the problems will pass, there may nevertheless be a need for help and support. It is important – both for the individual and for those around them – that you who are in contact with students notice their difficulties and try to guide them forwards at an early stage before the problems become too big. Ask a colleague for help!

What do I do when a student comes to me and wants to talk about how they are feeling?

- Listen and take in what the student is communicating, show that you take them seriously and remember that you can prevent the student’s difficulties becoming worse if you intervene at an early stage
- Try to focus on some more manageable part of the problem and help the student to understand what needs to change
- Ask the student what support they have around them, encourage them to contact their loved ones or offer to do it for them
- Maintain your integrity boundaries and your role in relation to the student, **e.g. do not promise confidentiality**. It is not always easy to draw your own boundaries for what you can help with and what you actually cannot do. Get advice from your manager and colleagues as support in determining a reasonable level of help, or contact the Student Health Centre.

Can I contact the Student Health Centre for advice if I am worried about a student?

Yes, consulting the Student Health Centre is always an option. Initially, when you contact the Student Health Centre for general advice, it is best not to mention by name the person you are concerned about. Only in the next stage, when you might help the student to get in touch with the healthcare service, do personal details come into the picture.

What should I say to the student if I think they need to get an appointment with the Student Health Centre or other help?

It can be a good idea to bear in mind:

- that you can say exactly how things are – that you are worried
- that the aim of the conversation is to show the student where help is available to enable them to go back to functioning normally
- to check with them whether they have asked for help and if so, where. If they have not, it is a good idea to tell them about the Student Health Centre and give them the contact details, or to book an appointment through the online booking system together with the student
- that you can offer to take the initial step of contacting the healthcare/support organisation

- that even if the student appears to reject your suggestions, they may prove at a later stage to have taken account of your concern and used the information you provided

How do I pass a student on to the Student Health Centre?

In most cases, it is preferable to encourage the student to contact the Student Health Centre themselves and book an appointment, or you can book an appointment through the online booking system in the student's presence.

Go to our website www.lu.se/studenthalsan, where you will find information about our telephone hours as well as an online booking system allowing the student to book an appointment themselves. We do not offer emergency appointments.

What do I do if a student is very introverted, difficult to reach, perhaps seems depressed but is unwilling to talk to anyone?

- Let the student know that you have noticed how they are keeping to themselves – and that you are willing to offer help
- Try to refrain from proposing a quick solution to what, in the absence of information, perhaps appears to be the student's problem
- Recurrent support initiatives, even if they only constitute a few minutes, can contribute to breaking down isolation. Encourage the student to maintain contact with their family and fellow students
- If the student talks about suicide, listen to them, they are communicating a need for help. Then get help immediately!

What happens if a person is in need of immediate professional help?

One signal can be when the student shows a trend towards significantly worse study performance and/or frequent absences from classes and exams.

There are a number of warning signals that should be taken extremely seriously. These are primarily:

- Aggressive behaviour, threatening behaviour towards others
- Talking and/or thinking about suicide
- Visible external signs, e.g. self-harm scars/low body weight/intoxication or substance abuse
- Changes in behaviour and attitude that are noticeable and worrying to people around them
- Expressions of thoughts that are unreasonable or incoherent and that cannot be corrected

Whom should I contact if a student is in need of immediate help?

When a student shows serious signs of mental illness, you are urgently to contact public healthcare; sometimes emergency care is needed.

EMERGENCY PSYCHIATRIC CARE Lund 046-17 41 00

EMERGENCY PSYCHIATRIC CARE Malmö 040-33 80 00

EMERGENCY PSYCHIATRIC CARE Helsingborg 042-406 27 30

In case of serious physical illness, call emergency services on **112** (NB: within LU: **0112**) or healthcare information **1177**

What do I do if the student is very agitated/disruptive or threatening?

Call the University's emergency services internally **20 700** or **046-222 07 00** from outside LU **and ask for help from the security team. It is a good idea to have the telephone number handy, e.g. on a post-it note on your desk or pre-entered on your mobile phone.**

In case of threats and/or violence, bear in mind:

- You can always ask for help via the central LU security service
- No one is to meet a threatening person on their own, even if the threats are not explicit but rather implied
- That work environment legislation also applies to higher education institutions – the risk of threats and violence is to be minimised. These issues are to be included in work environment discussions. The measures taken are to be documented.
- That if someone expresses threats or is violent, a police report and an incident report are to be filed. Always talk to your manager about what happened and make a plan for how you are to act if the person concerned comes back.

The University is not a public space – disruptive behaviour is not acceptable. A student who disrupts teaching can be subject to a disciplinary procedure.

What do I do if I don't want to be on my own to talk to a student?

- If the situation could be unpleasant, you are never to face it alone; make sure you have a colleague with you and speak to your manager about your work situation.
- You can always request assistance from the University's security service tel 20 700

Important telephone numbers

IN AN EMERGENCY DIAL 112 NB! Within LU 0112

LU's central emergency telephone number **20 700** or 046-222 07 00

Healthcare advice (open 24 hours/day) **1177**

Police 114 14

Emergency psychiatric care Lund 046-17 41 00

Emergency psychiatric care Malmö 040-33 80 00

Emergency psychiatric care Helsingborg 042-406 27 30

Student Health Centre 046-222 43 77

Find more information on the Student Health Centre's website

www.lu.se/studenthalsan

www.lunduniversity.lu.se/student-health

in the right-hand column under "Care and support" – "Related information"

On the web page www.lu.se/emergency you will find many more practical telephone numbers and an incident report form if something has already happened or if you wish to contact the central security service.